the so-called COVID–19 relief bill. States are awash with cash that they, frankly, don't know how to spend. The massive $1.9 trillion bill became law without the support of a single Republican because it was so extravagant and poorly targeted. Case in point: the blue State bailout. This legislation sent 350 billion additional dollars to State and local governments, many of which were not facing any budgetary shortfalls.

We have started to see a flurry of news stories in the past few weeks that have demonstrated exactly why we were opposed to this reckless spending. For example, California has reported a $75 billion budget surplus—a massive amount of money. Governor Newsom says this will be used to pay down past State debts, send direct checks to Californians, and add to its rainy day fund. In addition to California, you have New York, Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota. Each of these States is expected to have more than a $1 billion surplus—again, because of the massive shuffling of cash out of Washington, DC, into the States that was not targeted to COVID–19 relief.

This is exactly why we advocated against this tidal wave of funding for States that were not even operating in the red. Taxpayer dollars shouldn't be spent to erase the debts of mismanaged States or to add to their rainy day funds. They have the ability to raise revenue themselves, so it shouldn't be the responsibility of the Federal taxpayers to bail them out or to provide them with this huge cash cushion with their looking to try to find responsible ways to spend it.

Tens of billions of unused dollars from this legislation should be repurposed to help cover the costs of these investments without driving our national debt even higher. It is common sense, and I actually believe that there is a way to incentivize the States to use that additional cash for infrastructure purposes, whether it is through modifications and cost sharing between State and local governments. Many of those States are struggling to find a way, within the guidelines and guardrails that we have provided for COVID–19 relief, to spend it anyway, so why not spend it for infrastructure? Maybe there is a win-win there.

There are a number of ideas now on the table about how to pay for this infrastructure bill, but I hope we can all agree that the massive tax hike that President Biden is proposing is not the answer. This would constitute the largest set of tax hikes in more than half a century, and these increases would do serious damage to our economy just as we are coming out of a pandemic-induced recession.

At a time when our economy is already on fragile footing, the tax burden on Americans would be greater than that of our biggest trading partners and competitors, and this would have far-reaching consequences for our competitiveness and our economy as a whole. After all, we know these tax hikes won't be reflected in lower earnings for CEOs. The brunt will be borne by consumers, who will pay higher prices, and by workers, who will earn lower wages, and let's not forget those whose jobs have disappeared entirely. We are already seeing some price hikes on some of our most used consumer products, covering everything from cereal, to diapers, to lumber, and to cars.

This is not the time to increase taxes and drive inflation across our economy, which is, actually, a tax increase on low- and middle-income people. We need to find responsible ways to fund an investment in our infrastructure without hurting our economy and the people we represent. Right now, it appears that bipartisan progress is being made toward that just-right-sized policy and for it to be paid for in a responsible way or, at least, that is my optimistic hope.

So I want to thank Senator CAPITO for her leadership on this effort and all those who have been working with our Democratic colleagues and the administration and encourage them to continue to work with folks on our side of the aisle so we can get this done on a timely basis.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:30 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer. (Ms. SINEMA).

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

TAXES

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, yesterday marked the deadline for filing personal income taxes in America. I am sure many people spent the past weekend surrounded by 1099 forms and shoe boxes full of receipts, hoping to claim a well-deserved tax refund after a year of financial stress due to the pandemic.

That is another reason why the American Rescue Plan that Congress passed earlier this year was such a major accomplishment. It included, that plan, included the largest, single-year tax cut for middle- and low-income earners in the history of the Nation. Let me repeat that. This year's American Rescue Plan included the largest, single-year tax cut for middle- and low-income earners in America's history.

But for a privileged few, those tax cuts are pennies compared to the deductions they enjoy every year because of Republican tax proposals, proposals like the Trump tax plan that Republicans signed into law in 2017, just 4 years ago. Over the next few years, it is estimated that more than 80 percent of the benefits from this Trump tax plan will go exclusively to the top 1 percent of American earners—the top 1 percent. It is nothing more than welfare for the wealthiest.

Perhaps the most egregious aspect of the Trump tax plan is the billions of taxpayer dollars it will give to the world's wealthiest individuals and corporations over the next decade. We are already feeling the devastating impact this corporate giveaway has had on America's economy.

Listen to this now, if you just turned in your taxes. Last year, 55 of the largest companies in America paid zero—zero dollars in Federal taxes despite making more than $40 billion in profits. Forty billion dollars in profits; zero taxes. It is a glaring example of the imbalance in our tax system.

I don't think there is any rational explanation for having schoolteachers and janitors pay more in taxes than the largest corporations, but it seems the folks on the other side of the aisle disagree.

When Senator MCCONNELL met with President Biden last week, he said that raising taxes on corporations—the same corporations that paid zero last year in taxes—is a "red line" when it comes to funding the President's infrastructure package. That means Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader in the Senate, would rather cut taxes for the ultrawealthy than repair America's crumbling roads and bridges.

Did you see that picture in the news? Of the bridge? I think it was in Tennessee, on one of the interstates. It cracked so badly, they had to close it, close an interstate bridge. We remember just a few years ago in Minnesota, an interstate highway collapsed, taking American lives. It can happen and will continue to happen unless we do our part. That is not just bad policy; it is dangerous.

I guess this is the picture that I brought to show what was happening with this bridge in Tennessee. You can see the crack in the steel girders there and the reason they closed the bridge. God forbid some other bridge is in that same shape and we haven't discovered it or we won't discover it soon enough.

We need to put some money in our infrastructure. We count on it every day. People rely on the safety of these bridges and other facilities, and it is our job to make sure they are kept up.

That is not just bad policy, saying no tax increases for corporations if it means paying for infrastructure that way; it is dangerous.

Take a look at what happens when we fail to adequately invest in our infrastructure. That photo tells it all. A "structural crack" they called it. That was found in a bridge in Memphis, TN, last week. Tens of thousands of vehicles drive over that bridge every day. It connects commuters and commercial traffic between Arkansas and Tennessee. If not for a scrupulous engineer who caught the crack, local authorities